

Headline	Photographer conserves over 2,000 forest plant species in own yard		
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FOREST plants and wild orchids are replanted in the house compound, which is now a conservatory.

PHOTOGRAPHER Suzairi Zakaria's love for forest plants has led him to set up a conservatory for the endangered species in his house compound in Setiu, Terengganu.

Suzairi, 46, who has been involved in the tropical rainforest conservation efforts since 2015, has successfully replanted more than 2,000 species of forest plants, including 200 wild orchids found in bris soil and logging areas in the state.

He said forest plants such as ferns, wild gingers, pitcher plants, hoyas and various other species as well as wild orchids were replanted in his house compound, which has been turned into a conservatory called WildDome Research and Conservation Centre.

The centre now becomes a reference for conservationists, researchers and orchid enthusiasts from all over the country.

Suzairi, who is also known as the Dome, said the passion to conserve wild orchids and forest plants started when he often visited the Setiu Wetland to capture the lush forest landscapes rich with flora and fauna.

"There are places that I revisited have changed due to land and forest exploration. Most of which are the natural habitats of wild plants and orchids.

"So, whichever forest plants and wild orchids that can be saved, I will bring back and replant them," he said, adding that he has extended the conservation efforts to other logging areas, including the Tasik Kenyir area.

Suzairi has also succeeded in

discovering several new species such as pitcher plants, *Nepenthes latiffiana* and *Nepenthes domei* as well as wild orchids such as *Bromheadia petuangensis*, *Dendrobium ruseae* and *Dendrobium mizanii*, which was named after the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin.

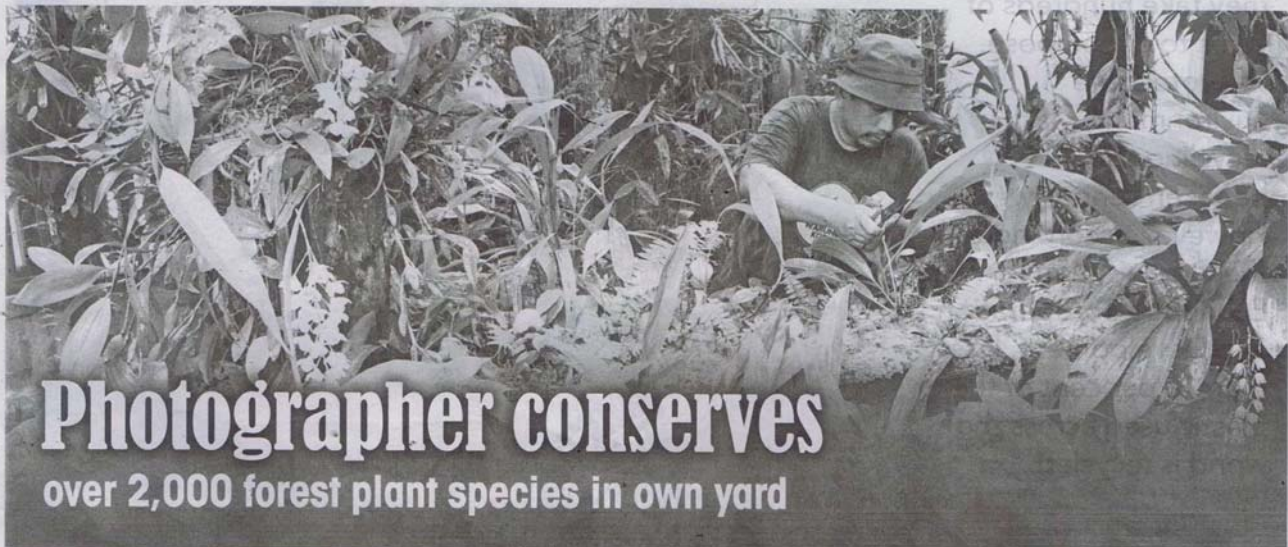
"I need to work with qualified botanists to elaborate on the findings of the new species because each discovery needs to have a written research paper to confirm the findings in any scientific journal," he explained.

He is currently working with Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Putra Malaysia, Forest Research Institute Malaysia and the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute.

Apart from being appointed Guest Fellow at the Faculty of Science and Marine Environment, UMT, Suzairi also receive international recognition from a Guatemalan orchid expert, who named a new orchid species in the country after him (*Chysis Domei*).

Meanwhile, UMT Faculty of Science and Marine Environment senior lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Jamilah Mohd Salim said Suzairi's efforts had raised the awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity among local communities.

"Suzairi's role also helps university researchers to know more about natural phenomena that occurs in the forest," she said. - BERNAMA



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SUZAIRI surrounded by forest plants in his yard. Photos: BERNAMA